

Consciousness as social construct:

Human consciousness is the reproduction of social and historical relations, more than the origin and center of meaning. Our interest in a closed, fixed, rational, and volitional self is fostered within an historically bound ideology. Ideologies vie for dominance in determining intelligibility. What does schooling do to you? Power of myth making. Relation of this power to religion, law, capacity to disseminate information. Naming as a magical act, to describe the things is to assert their existence. Otherwise for the culture, they do not exist. Rights of definition over things and persons. Certain subjectivities are elevated in culture, interacting relations with legal, social power. Subject = way we are subject to other's control, limited freedom, within authority relations; lang. as construction of bourgeois subjectivity, tied in with material conditions of literary production; self as recruited into place as an ideological construction, within specific historical formations; self as related to social and contractual bonds.

Because of a relation between knowledge and power relations, only certain things count as knowledge. Note whose words, and when, culturally are dismissed from the category of 'knowledge'. What is the culture's imaginary repertoire of representations? Cultural codes: Our imaginative version of what is human, how we form an image of the human, what about humanity is imagined ideologically as 'our common cultural heritage.' What culture proscribes and prohibits. How narrative functions to efface contradiction and awareness of the limited codes we regularly use or live under, by. Our limited use of language, our limited discursive frames.

Importance of understanding contradictions within ideology. Meaning is produced at the conjunctions of conflicting discourses, and the meanings [of a given expression, for example] shift and slip in the crevices between discourses as they are deployed at particular times.

Individualism and capitalism:

The acquisition of consciousness = individualism's relation to capitalism. The diary serves as a substitute clock or time sheet or calendar, esp. in urban life, which does not sense natural rhythms. Middle class emotional equivalent to social relations of production. The ideology of individualism, what does it entail? Relation of first person voice and witnessing to individualism? Variable as ethnic form of expression?

Patriarchal identity

The privatized and the publicized body [glamour, sports]. Bodies eroticized, exoticized, dominated, colonized. I look at me = I as male subject, me = the body observed. Removed from own body = specularly toward own body [John Berger, Ways of Seeing].

Gender and the generic he and the white male body as normative source of sexual knowledge, meaning, and identification. Massive representations of white male middle class attitudes, self concepts: "why can't they just.....?" About the rest of us. The I of individualism, male, in which the oppressor was seen as non white or non male.

Models of identity:

Culture inhabits our minds and structures our thoughts, body, sensory input. The community has preferred forms and subject matter for narrative discourse. Culturally authoritative texts embody prevailing schemes of life. Culture constructs an ideology of identity and also models of identity for our imitation. We accord models a lot of universal validity psychologically. They are persuasive, adolescent reading often shapes this. Where do models of identity come from? How disseminated? Where do they get their authority from? In and from what cultural institutions? How do models of identity change? Models are not just what people sense consciously but a

"more complex, less literally legible, process of cultural instruction that leaves no textual trace."
Eakin, p. 91

Language and culture:

Doxa= Barthes' word for received public opinion; language belongs to others; the voice feels alienated when it tries to express private life; we may feel excluded from public language; poet tries to find new ways of expressing the simplest fact. Common belief that we can promise to tell the truth and that language is transparent enough to be adequate to the task. Getting language is an intersubjective experience but shifts from home [mother, family] to school and work. Roles, shared values, shared discourses and their constraints.

Desire for subjective unity:

Commonly people hold a simultaneous belief and disbelief in the fully constituted subject.
Nussbaum, p. 33 "Though we have confidence that our conflicting [subject] positions will add up to a whole, it is partially that we attend to the particular memories that match the available codes and make us believe in a fundamental unity" [Christa]

Do I think that I immediately and automatically convey in language my intended meaning, that it is usually immediately apprehended?

Language of the oppressed:

Interpellation = the subject comes to recognize herself as she is hailed in language Vs double consciousness for blacks, gays. Man and woman are culturally produced categories that reciprocally shift their nuances of meaning through time and place. Cultural analysis needed of what it meant to be [sick, female, mother, artist, leader, etc.] at that moment and in that context historically. We may 'disidentify' when held in subject positions that are painfully incompatible. What were/are the socially acceptable escapes and the unacceptable or unaccepted ones, outlaw behavior?

resistance and its containment by ideology:

Degree of class consciousness, gender consc, rebelliousness in autob.; awareness of or revealing the relation between sexual division of labor and power/knowledge relations? Conflictual discourses are yoked together within ideology to encourage bourgeois subjects to [mis]recognize themselves. Can we reimagine the familiar and the natural. Replicate or challenge prevailing notions of identity? Texts and ideology that constrain our access to the real; we need the consensual code of objectivity to make intelligible, meaningful statements about events.

Nussbaum, p. 37. "Autob. language allows the previously illiterate and disenfranchised to adopt a language sufficiently acceptable to be published, and at the same time, it enables them to envisage new possibilities in the interstices between discourses or to weave them in new hybrid forms." Vs. Ways that oppressed peoples live out, and often write, a lot of appeasement. They block expressions of bitterness and anger, especially because of white control of instruments of public expression. Women block the expression of rage to self and in public expression. Appeasement enacted by the oppressed, which is in public discourse is a fictionalizing that goes on in the service of fact, that staves off reprisal.

The oppressed often do not see how their writing is as steeped in culture as their lived selves were. Vs what Toni Morrison said about slave narratives in "The Site Of Memory": "In shaping the experience to make it palatable to those who were in a position to alleviate it, they were silent about many things and they 'forgot' many other things." P. 110

Communities of oppressed peoples see themselves in community with, for, and like others. They keep alive alternative, non-hegemonic, often resistant discourses. Markers are given of race and gender--How reader decodes those? How they are artistically worked

Acting against silence and self censorship. Articulation of the painful moment both with outside world and inside own experience or mind can be 'turned to some good' for one's own community. Identity and desire to change it may well be a point of departure, bane of subject/subjectivity's existence.

Nussbaum, p.138 "Resistance and change occur at the point of contradiction between the available subject positions, when it is not possible to elide the gaps, and when those elements, previously excluded from frames of intelligibility, are recognized, so that in the continual struggle between languages and ideologies, in the process of a struggle for power, resistance propels a move to new positions that will explain the contradictions." Spaces that are unspoken, unwritten, unrepresented, not yet described; liminal selves that do not have closure; no words for talking about her/our own sexuality and no personal narratives for conveying her/my response. .

Autobiographical models:

The confessional model. Autob or TV says confess yourself with candor. Rousseau -- then you become a model: "I did it, so should you." Autobiog. as act of psychoanalytic resistance in providing such closure. Use of conservative, fixed models of identity. Documentary film often gives conservative models of identity, and on television, the current era changes individual identity into a sign, cipher.

Cultural relativism of identity

Human nature, inner states, dispositions, and capacities are not the same everywhere or from culture to culture or from one moment in history to the next within a culture or from one subculture to another. Alternative moral traditions and their apparatuses in different cultures articulate emotion, self, and agency in very different ways. We live in various language communities that shape our perception and experience. We even live in various languages, which may contradict each other [Dialogic Imagination]

Single social actor, her agency, her multiple subject positions. She is not the originator of her own meaning, speaking in some 'authentic' voice. Inside historical moment/s and ideological practices. Intersubjectivity part of woman's self definition. Women learn to know self via relationships.

Emotion and culture

Geertz -- emotions as cultural artifacts. We elaborate, discuss inner states in conversation, decision making. A collectively felt need to articulate human emotional life. Parents discuss their children's inner states. How we get, solicit, signs of our identity from others.

Others articulate us.

Others use, need a concept of us. I meet their expectations by self projections, roles taken up in daily life that shape me. I act as a dramatic 'character' within my family, both as I and others see it. May cite old dialogues, comments of others that used to victimize me. I can claim that influence of x person/s on me was good or bad. Others do this all the time. Multiple, conflicting narratives = popular versions of social process. Usually a conventional aspect of what I rebel against, defining some social situation as a 'trap'. Each person has their own "I" as their primary mode of perceiving; in the text, discussed alongside or contested to the collective knowledge of a family or community. Critic or biographer must show both formal value systems and ones author explores. Scandal and the family, who usually erase or revise the memory: [SS]. My desire to redefine roles: for others. For sake of children, for the record, for the reader.

Partial, interactive moments of the self

Work approaches depicting characters' notions of self and other with confidence, yet never gives a unitary perspective on this, only moments of each "I". Carmen Martin Gaité, The Back Room,

1978: "Each person who has seen us or spoken to us at a certain time retains one piece of the puzzle that we will never be able to see all put together." [p.167]. More is exchanged in any speech act than either speaker or receiver comprehends. Show the context, contradictions, and refractions of each self off others, who are also in the process of producing their own selves. My range of experience is known to whom and unknown to whom [also important in range of reader/viewer response]? My belief in roles I play? I may attack and resist, and also be dependent on these definitions. Need for connection. Need to know: who am I like? Who are my people?

Different domains of language-use exist and are taken up in relation to each other, often in interactive and transgressive ways. The body is at the boundaries of different discourses -- which produce meaning, through which subjectivity emerges, and over/through which power plays.

Family oral tradition

Importance of oral tradition. of conversations, recalling family history, moral coerciveness, gossip. Assumptions about the self within an ethnic community or subculture. A women's issue. Billos demonstrates in both tapes how family memory works and what it silences. Negotiated, interactive, sometimes painful process of creating family history, and how this is women's labor. Mapping the dynamics of the family members, told through the use of the family tree. Yeager: women's pleasure in talking, gossip, telling -- women bilingual in women's culture, where conversation is subversively multivoiced.

Black family stories

African American braiding of women's generations in the story as a way of creating the meaning of any one person's experience. The importance of the blended story. [Braham, p.118]. Orchestrating voices and interpretations of black family

Non-individual use of 'I'. Person in struggle representing group. Characteristic of many other cultures. Often unit = extended family. Sometimes indiv not differentiated from 'nature'. Very important when oppressed groups present themselves for interviews in media, to public at large, 'testimonio' not = individualism.

Social denial of the subjectivities of the oppressed

Mechanically society judges 'others' by the most conventional bases, as if 'they' had preordained roles. Many men are also invisible, and especially children. Policing actions on circulation of bodies. Body seen only in terms of its margins = racism and homophobia, where the marginalized " find themselves partitioned in their bodies, culturally embodied." Smith, P. 269

Lack of value accorded to whom? Lack of value accorded to x traits? Women's self denial as a role and cultural value.

Assert, even struggle for, right of definition over someone; e.g., parents over children and vice versa

Internalized oppression

The oppressed have internalized many attitudes of the oppressor, who holds them invisible. Living in unequally related worlds and cultures. Get pulled into others' fictions; current usefulness of extending the metaphor of the dysfunctional family to social groups, allowing one to discuss what voices are being suppressed. Internalized social codes = individuals as self regulating.

The consciousness of self of those born into colonization [must know the ways, subjectivities of the masters to survive]

Masochism, fragmentation, layers of expressed and repressed material within mental life. Explanations for masochism in self presentation, why women use a self representation of

weakness: strangeness, women's otherness Vs acts of self possession, public passivity, lack of what is valued in culture. Also metaphoric rooms of their own; in capitalism, women support, create ways of life in private and suppressed sphere. Hacer = do, make = the public sphere where official naming takes place. Masochism and victimization still a resistant discourse: Reader as hailed by the resistant discourses in the autob. even as the autob. subject acknowledges the conditions that made her less than human [Hershman, S/S]. Violence is done to the presumably less than human, which becomes the excuse for systematic injuries.

The diary or journal offers representation of our imagined relation to reality, and they exclude or marginalize other constructs about/of reality, or physical details deemed narratively unimportant. Kristeva: Exclude unruliness from the higher subject. She abjects her own body. "Out of body" religious narratives and relation to women. Gestures of sublimation may still support the notion of the body or self's baseness.

The social body

Smith: body = demarcated subjects, bounded temporalities, a private surround, trajectories of identification, the grounding for an identity [continuous, stable], seemingly one with I/me, seeming continuity between biology and gender, space of contradiction, drift, homelessness, not at home in body [home = private, familiar, safe, protected boundaries], body policed to make order amidst chaos; the abject and relation to darkness, unruliness, disorder; uncanny stranger = unheimlich; some bodies socially rendered grotesque or abnormal.

Taking something for the self

In daily life, I always hold something apart of self from the roles I perform for others, articulating it just for 'me' and perhaps also for god. Self enhancement as function of autob. Authority, sure of your own voice, both when you affirm things and when you say/said no.

Motive of discovery

Revisiting a painful experience = A way to gain control over it, to change, to move beyond it instead of replaying it like a broken record. When articulating becomes communicating, I see others have same experience, not so unusual. To move from memory to society, interactively, changes the obsessive character of the memory. Old demons exorcized.

Freeing yourself. Get rid of old constrictive categories. Seize life. Take something actively for oneself.

Narrative's relation to patterns of experience in human life, and to the patterning of them

Need to narrativize, invent a version of the self. We and others exist for us and others in the stories we can tell about ourselves. Narrative as constituting much of daily life and experience. Role of story in defining identity in spoken discourse. We want to verify events in our family, for ex. , not just tell them. We are always eliciting a point of view on the self, and the selves of others. We do not know how not to do this. Children have access to story telling early, as way of accounting for life.

Life as lived and life as written both deeply embedded in culture. David Carr, Time, Narrative, And History: "Before we dismember them analytically and even before we revise them retrospectively, our experiences and actions constitute narratives for us. Their elements and phases are lived through as organized by a grasp which spans time, is retrospective and prospective, and which thus seeks to escape from the very temporal perspective of the now which makes it possible." P. 69 The I, our first order self, is at heart a story teller.

The ways that autob self expression is a pervasive social and cultural phenomenon. Believing that I am free, responsible, agent of my own actions; that language is my autonomous, expressive creation.

Daily life's plans and verbalization. The structures of women's labor, family, daily lives.

"Contingent reality" -- Frank Kermode. Tropisms: non-linguistic, subconscious, multiple, shifting. Irreversibility of history. Eakins, p. 33. Language as a "fixative for the evanescent stuff of consciousness. "in this sense the lang. of autobiog..... would be a conscious doubling of the largely unconscious agency of language in the constitution of memory."

How adverse conditions can also sometimes be enabling ones with an aspect of agency? E.G., Illness as metaphor, Sontag

Use of chronology. Story of an individual, needs chronology, development. Ricour: chronology as important to human life for giving meaning to time. Desire to see my life as having a form, to guarantee that my experiences were not meaning- neutral.

"I was born" = possessing your birth like a property or credential

Confessions: "In Rousseau, truth is subjective, based on feeling, and it evolves from the recounting of past events that all have equal significance" Nussbaum

An inner listening to the different components of the self

Relation of autob. to personal space, intimacy, home, invisible internal or psychic spaces.

Re-found objects trigger reflection.

Interaction of self as subject and as object.

One person's mix of styles and selves, contradictions and confusions, revealing impasses and stumblings in language

Assert one's distinctiveness and continuity

Resistance to idea that consciousness should perish. Wish for continuous identity.

Memory, wish to become present to one's past, simply assume the survival of the past

What age does someone write their memoirs? For what purpose?

The singularity of each life.

Unconventionality--How revealed? What it has meant, entailed? What it brought upon me?

Past as constantly interacting with present,

The past as constantly changing, as altering as it is in memory over time. Literally, a revisionist history always. Memory as a palimpsest. Largely unconscious process.

Past self is present, yet strangely other to me [Augustine]. Past interpenetrating the present

We need past revised by memory to keep a sense of continuous identity over time. We evolve and need to keep continuity with present and past selves. Eakin, p 67: " In this view, memory would be not only literally essential to the constitution of identity [we need think only of the consequences of amnesia] but also crucial in the sense that it is constantly revision and editing the remembered past in order to square with the needs and requirements of the self we have become in the present."

Self invention

Need to invent a version of yourself--need is greater for some people. The struggle to say it may be the struggle to define my own life. Life becomes a text to write and do.

Self invention, feeling an existential imperative to create a space for the self to live and move, pushes against and engages with the pressures of a culture, may give illusion of greater autonomy. Shaping the life, while living it, while talking, while writing about it = a part of performance

Performance + narrativity/social role/desire

Even performance in the theater is about the possibility of shaping a role, a self, a meaning for some aspect of self.

We have multivalent embodiment. Note performances body is allowed.

Drawing on social and family mythologies. Ritualized behaviors. Each person frames the memory of everyone else or of a shared event, note how.

Ironic or self reflexive-- showing how this account is being produced. Does it show lies or indicate something being passed over quickly?

Moments of 'guying,' clueing the audience that you are exaggerating.

The performance of the practice of autobiography

Barthes, C Lucida: theater of posing = self creation + conventions and rituals that try to appropriate the self + person I want others to think I am + impossibility of not posing

Metaphors

Metaphors, thus fiction, always inevitable when giving meaning to experience. We use metaphor all the time in daily life: orientational [up/down, in/out, deep/ shallow, central/peripheral]; fight/flight. Imaginative constructs have direct relation to emotion, punning in the unconscious and dreams [Freud].

Body is fragmented into a metaphor. Metaphoric use of the body has great social consequences. The social meaning of the body. The relation of individual body politics to the body politic? Stallybrass and white: "thinking the body is thinking topography and vise versa"

Metaphor often used to testify to the unbearable, the otherwise unacceptable, otherwise unspeakable experiences, things that have terrible power over us

Symbolic truths. 'masks'

Taking up subject positions that extend variously over time

Mind is formed to an astonishing degree by inventing the self, which structures perception, organizes memory, and segments and purposefully pursues the 'events' of a life. Jerome Bruner, life as narrative. We want to be the story teller of our own actions

Self as a developmental, time embedded construct.

How I came to be what I am, how he or she did?

The body and its borders

Smith, p. 271. "The autobiographer's specific body is the site of multiple solicitations, multiple markings, multiple invocations of subject positions....It is the site of heterogeneous axes of signification..."

Smith. P 267. Identity's body. "...Subjectivity is the elaborate residue of the border politics of the body since bodies locate us topographically, temporally, socioculturally as well as linguistically in a series of transcodings along multiple axes of meaning. . . [t] he body of the text, the body of the narrator, the body of the narrated I, the cultural body, and the body politic all merge in skins and skeins of meaning."

Illness

The politics of illness. If you exaggerate your symptoms, which and why, and what effect does that have on your social milieu?

Many bodily losses and deficits affect sense of self. How is illness manifested, thematized in the writing?

Topographies

Autobio's use of space. The body and geographical space.

Autob. often had a reluctance to focus on the body, more on relation to society.

The spaces she finds for herself. The spaces she occupies: prescribed, multiple, contradictory, transgressing what prescriptions? What spatial and temporal arenas are naturalized by dominant cultural voices, areas the marginalized are denied access to. How Euroamericans expect to name the spaces, expect individual authorship, attach importance to the proper name

How memory functions

What triggers memory. Note the relation connections of 'pieces'. Resurrecting of bits and pieces. Associative streams and connections.

Family history is also discontinuous and heterogeneous, as is the history of the individual

Memory is unreliable and motivated. Temptation to fill in, necessity to narrativize, Vs 'chronology' [Hayden white]. Which memories are important?

Psychoanalytic perspectives

There is always an unconscious shaping of the autobiographical material. To imagine is to construct, constitute reality.

Regressive impulse into the preverbal, to begin at the beginning. The introspective child, child in the adult; the observer in a social situation; the future novelist or screenwriter; the reader of novels.

Assumption that the truth of our selves can be told. The 'felt' truth as calling up resonances in reader.

Intersecting frames of reference

Psychoanalytic explanations of common autob. structures: displacement of the father, reunion with the mother. Confession, telling a secret, [infantile] sexuality as the constant subtext, the performance of the telling.

Writing autob as a story may be a defense, revealing no secrets but definitively defining the story. Ingenious strategies of denial and repression. [apply to Rousseau]

Uncorrupted consciousness: r g collingwood. We hope for or evaluate work on 'honesty,' lack of repression and self censorship

Ways of knowing

The selves, plural, that everyone has. An inner listening to the different components of the self.

State-specific consciousness. The borders between different kinds of consciousness and the invitation to cross those borders

Mirroring I use with others to construct myself- "mirrors can be set at angles; the reflections are

not just simple repetitions." Mj fischer, p.97

Thinking of me as a dynamic subject, changing over time, shaped by changing location in history, situated in multiple discourses = "I shift" Vs. Thinking of me as a coherent, unified self, originator of my own meaning.

Need language to create meaning and therefore constitute reality.

The personal relation to history

The author is situated in a specific, indeed strategic cultural locus, which s/he explores as a way to see new connections in the interacting social, cultural, and psychic forces in his/her milieu. Question history's continuities as we reimagine the familiar, the family, and the natural.

Our access to the real is enabled, constrained, and held within a textual boundary [e.g., looking at old family photos, what the older generation has to say about the past, etc.]

We want to believe that there is a continuous history out there that our self can discover. Socially, note how auto is linked to social mobility, often looking back on the management of one's affairs. We stubbornly persist in believing in, speaking of, and writing about ourselves.

One's own life frame or life history "straddles major social and cultural transformations." Michel M J Fischer, "Autobiographical Voices (1,2,3) And Mosaic Memory: Experimental Sondages In The (Post)Modern World." Auto And Postmodernism, p. 82

Relating past times, events: we find the ones that seem to have had an essential formative impact. They seem the product of discrete moments and experiences.

Fleetingness

The moments the characters' personality expresses itself. The gestures. Fleeting aspects captured and the tentativeness of their meaning. How a photo stimulates visual memory, how visual memory is like a photo: Barthes in Camera Lucida: I want my [mobile] image always to coincide with my [profound] self. my image is heavy, motionless, and stubborn -- which is why society sustains it

. I

n a photo, I am always an expression."

Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: "I am truly becoming a specter."

Multiple identities

Interdependency of selves, both within each and relationally, to those loved.

Individuals and groups simultaneously hold multiple identities. In contemporary society, and more and more civic rituals are performed ironically, for commercial profit, and as play acting.

Cross cultural lives

Acculturation. How the self changes, what gets expressed, lost. Speech and its relation to silence. Education and learning the public language of the dominant culture.

Get new public identity and thus power. Diminished private individuality with assimilation may allow for greater public individuality

Immigrants learn via education that separation from the past is necessary because the past is useless.

Immigrant reliance on voice, intimate conversation, communal bases of identity, intersubjectivity.

Multiple discursive formations

I am multiply situated [in roles] and I participate in contradictory discourses. Styles of discourse. Kinds of verbal/visual expression. Expressions on faces. Voices.

Truth/fiction. Path, journey. Strands of life stories that are just suggested. Before/after historically uncertain.

Are my utterances shaped by where I as a subject am situated; perhaps my utterances are always fragmented, partial, and inadequate to expressing me?

Resort to more use of metaphor when received models for identity seem less adequate

Changing contexts. Pressing contradictions. Disjunctures

Plural selves in me and in the writing: Relation of the crafting process to the fractured self

Personae. Layers, aspects. Moments of personality. Needs.

Internal dialogue

Boundaries and borders

Boundaries between various modes of representation or between art forms and life? Where does legitimacy lie in and among those boundaries?

A people may have a subjectivity grounded in empirical cultural specificity, yet the data first as gathered by oral historians or documentarists, and then the texts from that data will have a lot of culturally-shaped formal biases, many of them unconscious.

Global stratification and integration. Juxtapositions of things, events, experiences once separated by time and place = the way that capitalism collapses time and space for the sake of commerce. Globalized movements of mass populations

Multiple readerships

Revision and memory, interactive processes: text constantly revised story in the process of making it; a series of accumulating moments of writing, revision, self-invention in process, and reception

Women feel it less need to forge a constant identity in autob. Women's works call on us to recognize shifting alliance of selves with the social relations they are embedded in.

The 'authorization' complex that obsesses autob.

What I claim as authority and the truth value of what I disclose. Role's relation to self..

Authenticity. My public self Vs private self, esp. for women.

Authorization -- culture's laws about what truth is, who may tell it, who is authorized to judge it. Danger of turning the past into a new myth.

Rhetoric of truth telling = confession, demanded by psychology and religion

'off the cuff'--Surprise someone into revelations. Spontaneity. Relaxed and off guard

Self censorship, silence. Introspection Vs 'out there'. Certain forms of speech uttered in a context where it is marginalized or even criminalized.

Genre theory

Genre needs formal constituents, linguistic register, or audience effects.

Hans Robert Jauss: genre assumes and depends on shifting horizon of people's expectations about that genre; audience and readers have presuppositions of a genre's permanence and autonomy.

Makers and receivers believe and expect certain things about a style, genre, tradition, repertoire of texts.. Do not cast too elite a net when discussing genre and genre expectations.

Any genre functions not only as an example of that genre but in the framework of the historical ensemble of texts where they actually function, including contexts of other genres and other texts by the same author. Do not blind self as a reader to historical evolution of genre, and related phenomena both then and now.

Northrop Frye's genre definitions: epos = speech addressed to an audience. Fiction = prose genre in which an isolated reader is addressed through the intermediary of the text. Drama = the author is hidden. Lyric = public takes part in the discourse that the poet addresses elsewhere. Frye is like la pensée sauvage

Lit criticism can become or is always normative; theory as normative vis a vis contemporary art

PL, "Autob And Lit History" p. 145: "...Literary genres are themselves the product of the redistribution of formal traits in part already existing in the earlier system, even if they used to have different functions in it. On condition of grasping the evolution of the systems, the investigation of origins and of continuity allows us to focus on the elements of the game form which new genres are constructed, and the manner in which the horizons of expectation have been progressively transformed."

Autobiography narrative theory--Rousseau's model obsessed autobiographers for a long time.

Relation to autob. novel and to biography.

Biography and history, and audience expectations about 'accuracy'. In autob. The relation to the external world always depends on otherwise unobtainable information about the author's inner world. The novel elicits the phantasmatic pact, the suspension of disbelief.

Constitute, record, express identity -- both the biographer and autobiographer do this

Essay-like autob. similar to Montaigne = thematic, synthetic, logical organization
The writerly autob.

= free association, unconventional, lyricality, formal experimentation, cavalier way with referential truth [issues then of legal liability]

What are the writer's resources for meaning production? Useful for writer to understand that there are various structures for autob. Presents different kinds of opportunities for self expression.

Pure chronology can indicate boring repetition and order but also dissolution and the meaninglessness of the passing of time

Instability of the text. Interconnections and cathexes from different realms and stages of one's

experience.

Child is father to the man. Childhood always told from adult's voice, memory, retracing, even deconstructing the words of a child. It is like creating fiction, necessarily, using a narrative present in many cases.

boundaries: boundaries = text/referent/audience/oeuvre/maker's life and times, past and now/genre boundaries/the theme's boundaries/ the producer as finally enabled by the act of making this text

fragmented modernist style: modernist autob recounts incoherence, details that don't all fit together, scanty info in some parts, often inconclusiveness. Does not want to impose order via lit. construction, replicates a kind of plenitude or 'structure' found in experience.

Language and reference

How can reference ever get transacted if lang. lets signified seem to = signifier. Reference is always clouded, cannot take the fact for granted, cannot take the form in which the fact is expressed for granted.

The referential in its raw factuality fascinates the realist, the historian of popular culture and narratives.

autobio as genre = regarded as expressing the history of the self; forms shift in diff. historical period. The conventions of intelligibility. The genre expresses the position that the self exists and can be represented textually; assumes an unified, authoritative position for the narrative "I" who holds the discrete elements together; a life story, with a beginning middle and end. Vs a diary or a chronology. Choosing the 'best' form, and its relation to the classic realist's text tie to some reality 'out there'. Now we want autob to represent new kinds of consciousness.

Culture structures forms for meaning, emotion

Can only know others' symbolic forms and inherited conceptions, what they perceive by means of or through, cannot know their 'feelings'. Symbolic forms include words, images, institutions, and behaviors, and allow the developing, communicating, and passing on of knowledge and attitudes = Geertz' definition of culture

Structures of meaning available culturally inform our sense of personhood and its interrelatedness with history.

Inner states have to be culturally expressed and negotiated via language. Some languages have more or different terms for inner states that other languages lack.

Grammar

Benveniste: "I" designates the speaker. "It is in a through language that an individual constitutes himself as a subject, the I who is uttering the present instance of the discourse" problems in general linguistics, p. 224. The 'I' is a shifter, always changing its referent in time and space. I is speaking and spoken, writing and written. 'I' and 'you' are words that have real reference only within discourse, at the very moment of the act of enunciation.

Benveniste: I serves to distinguish itself from a you. I refers to the reality of the discourse, the instance in which the speaker proclaims herself subject. Thus I can appropriate the entire language to myself by designating myself as subject.

proper name: Lejeune: we attempt to resolve the indeterminacy of the first person by anchoring it to the proper name.

chronotype: grammar: I-you, here-there, then- now organize the autob's chronotype.

What are the relations between colloquial self referentiality, matter of fact and casual, popular texts, media--esp. Television, and elite texts, literary texts? Self referentiality in congressional testimony, as mediated by lawyers and cases on court TV, as mediated by psychological or medical 'treatment'? Manifold, heterogeneous practices of self expression

Pl--those who do not write, collaborative, anthropological, oral history texts, as told to....

Pl--the proper name in autob = mediating term between the text and the world beyond it. Shared by author, narrator and protagonist. = act of enunciation = I = sign of authorial intention in the text = something the reader immediately grasps as 'identity'

Pl: utterance or enonc = the past as recreated in the autob. Enunciation = the present unfolding of the autob act recreating the past

Genette: autodiegesis, autodiegetic. Author = narrator = character. One's 'own' story. "I" as grammatical marker establishes a place from which to speak = also the subject matter. A signature of self representation. Perhaps serves as a source of authority

Narrator + historical subject + autob. subject. An author is a person who writes and publishes Vs inner life that only s/he knows

An oppressed person may heighten the contradictions in the discourses of self representation

Heighten disjuncture, disruptive effect Vs 'naturalization' of gender, of the genre, or of the way the oppressed get reduced to stereotype

A "reconstructed" life. Use autobiog to affirm and certain identities

What does it mean to say that experience produces a voice, even more problematic the voice of a group?

Self inscription

Text evolves, I discover and follow things. I may be able to think something out only by writing it [sarton]

How do real selves in the world assemble themselves?

self portraiture's technical resources and demands + the project of the writer; written interiority and its possibility, and its interaction with the material reality of one's lived experience

I create a narrative out of data. I choose to convey x kind and y range of things. Making a text out of one's self. Making a text out of an old image

Meaning comes out of selection and sequencing, word/image choice, assigning dialogue, doing some things in narrator's own voice.

What sort of I is being called into being or hailed in the autob. text? subject = to become subject to one's own name, identity, self- knowledge; autob arising out of time when personhood or identity seems in crisis

Can I look hard at myself, without self pity. Where does self censorship come in?

Seeing beyond any single conceptual/moral category. What does not establish, figure as identity? What is off limits?

Anxiety about posing for a photo

Boundaries between various modes of representation or art forms and life? Where does legitimacy lie in and among those boundaries?

Showing how the account is being produced

Inscribing the self. Traces that indicate how the account was produced

Struggle for self definition = a struggle with the form.

Observation and description

Relation to biography, in terms of responsibility

Various kinds of reference. Exactitude.. Evidentiary style

How are relations between historical past and present consciousness delineated?

Observation of internal processes remembering one's family milieu social processes change, loss, growth

The eyewitness is the needed interpreter of events yet always suspect and limited. Plain talking style. When one intends to or is taken to speak about their group, as representative

Colloquialisms. Personal specificity. Cultural and subcultural specificity. Establish history or realism, as in novel. Oral traditions . Everyday expressions. Humor. Ways of telling stories about the past, esp. family history

the appeal of the referent: how to find new ways of formulating daily experiences, the quotidian

Relation to sociological or anthrop. interview

Autobiog offers author's own interp that counteracts sociological or anthr interpretation of an interview. Authors' contradictory attitudes toward their experiences.

Interp. comes from researcher's own self representational models

Interp. may see interview as a representational voice, imposing a unity on the person

Fischer, 104. "...Autobiographers who acknowledge decentered, conflicted, contradictory, fallible selves position their multiple parts vis- a-vis linguistic, libidinal, social, historical, familial, generational, ethnic, gendered, technological, intercultural, or other processes."

Attention paid to vehicles of memory, forgetting, desire, information, documentation, impression

Issue of sincerity in autob.= good try at coming to terms with one's life, at trying to understand it. Sincerity points to a basis in referential truth rather than a convincing deception

We have a desire for immediate discourse, pure presence. Wm. James in principles of psychology [1:238-39]: "Remembrance is like direct feeling: its object is suffused with a warmth and intimacy to which no object of mere conception ever attains."

The fact of writing an autob. is very important step in their life, it is biographically significant, even if only as performance

See ourselves as a social text as we investigate the ideological bases of the discourses that have shaped us. Chains of metonymies demonstrate cultural inter-reference and also cultural interference in how things are described. Pluralized perspectives = internal realities on a large

demographic scale.

The textual production of the "I". The one who writes in relation to the one who is

The autobiographical text and the body:

What specific body does the writer claim, is her founding identification via the body or not, what performances is the body allowed, for and before whom does she reveal or conceal her body, whose history of the body is it, is the body given to or withheld from the reader? How does the body circulate narratively, what's the relation between the narrative's positioning of the body and relation of that to subjectivity, what lexicon of the body is developed or created, emphasis on the whole or [which?] Parts, how are other bodies positioned in the text?

Pact about reference

The trusting reader; writer has to work with and not paralyze the reader's trust in reference. Reference feels important in autob. Even if we see it as a construct, the referential intention. Holland: reality testing is predominant feature of act of reading non fiction

The 'felt' truth. What is being explored? About a history, perhaps verifiable, not fictitious. Feels like psych. verisimilitude of a past and child/young person/adult's relation to it. Descrip. of past has tension between contingency and desire.

PL: "Autob Pact" p.21. "Identity is not resemblance. It is a fact immediately grasped-- accepted or refused, at the level of enunciation; resemblance is a relationship subject to infinite discussions and nuances, established from the utterance."

Lejeune [PI] Auto = retrospective prose narrative about one's own existence, focusing on the author's life, esp. 'the story of his personality.' Auto in France, p. 14

Commitment to truth does not necessary entail notion of a fully constituted self or subject or a teleological narrative.

Holland's reality testing Vs use of non fiction as entertainment, confession/therapy, to sell ads, epistiphelia

An element of resistance to any desire to repeat past = it is not really done with or past

Writer thinks about reader in advance and vice versa

PL, 'Autob Pact' p.24, in italics in the original: "in biography, it is resemblance that must ground identity; in autob, it's identity that grounds resemblance. Identity is the real starting point of autob.; Resemblance, the impossible horizon of biography."

To be sincere, the author guesses how readers desire reference and might interpret what s/he tells them. In this way, author uses ref. both as ref. and to endow him/herself with reality in specific textual ways.. I suspect how story will affect reader and so exploit its potential for reference, choosing to develop and endow self with x reality and y traits. Constructing a relation to an implied viewer, a pact [Sidonie Smith, Pat Schweickart]. How does the text set up whether we trust it or not?

What expectations does an autob text kindle in the reader? Reader considers what s/he knows of authorial consciousness, looking back on text so far, and thinks also about potential autobiography of her own life

Distance or closeness between me and reader/viewer

Reader uses text in a self referential way

Pleasure and motive for reading this kind of text. A self and truth are created and realities [re]discovered. We also read autobiog as performance, as construct, seeing the artifice is part of the pleasure

If I am writing, witnessing to define my self into being, what is reader's role? Invitation to reader to enter text on emotional and analytic level.

Calling up, evoking resonances in reader's experience, own psych. formation or past = a kind of interpellation or hailing of subjectivity, a confirmation = source of my empathy with the writer, her text

"If the story of one woman's life provides a script the reader enters, resignifies, and in some collaborative sense makes her own, then contemporary women's personal narratives chart rich new possibilities for the ways women may want to live their lives. They present forms at once fragmentary and 'contextual' enough to satisfy postmodernist ideas about the 'self' and powerful enough to line a reader's consciousness to an author's testimony." P.4 Braham.

To clarify something, to locate it in history, why it was written--to clarify something, to locate it in history, "to sift our experiences for the essential grain". Braham, p. 48

Use others' life histories to clarify and shape self, to reinterpret a moral tradition

How woman's writing invites other women to enter into it, to merge with her.

Why it was written

Interpret, translate, express, articulate. Pleasure of epistemological exploration, variety. Challenge taken for granted assumptions and categories.

A desire for connection.

Valorize alternative moral traditions, which have their own hermeneutical and epistemological tools

Show alternative ways of expressing emotion, personhood, agency, family.

To invite other moral traditions as equals in this inquiry

Set out, demonstrate a pathway from oppression to escape

History and redemption

Relate one's role as witness or maker of history; may be a wish both to tell the past [mimetic] and to reorder existence through writing [metaphoric]. Some people survive atrocity out of sheer determination to give witness. Witnessing as part of a person's present, shaping their current social self and commitments.

Redemptive or deterministic models of history

Family members in love can construct a mutual memory, blending together individual memories in the present. Sometime painful, sometimes leading to new relations, breaking old patterns. In leading us back, memory may turn us about; memory has a crucial relation to the life we have yet to live, and the decisions we make about that.

Observation as historical

The observer imposes story, definition of historical reality, even in the moment of perception. No

unmediated facts.

Reconstruct the mentality of ordinary people vs Cannot just think of history in terms of collective experience

Older autob = concern with outward human appearance, like novel. More recent, psychic individuality, doubt, drift

We each experience history, our self formation and self understanding have passed through history.

Events as lacking organization

Annals as 'unorganized truth': Hayden white

Events are not stories. History as different from the history we write.

Betrayal into time. Loss, mortality. Flux

Ohne mich -- seeing history as something we can choose not to get involved in, as distant

simple chronologies: diary less a narrative, a 24 hour repetition, opting for discontinuity or repetition

Our personal sense of the past

Autobiog writes a remembered experience, but the experience itself justifies and sometimes affects narrative style.

Sense of past before we begin to write autob, somehow complete, a story there to be told. Whatever the past was to us, it felt like a series of successive presents as we lived in it.

Life history--Need to recover a past. Need distance to gain perspective. There may be a question to which the writer or reader needs to find an answer.

Memory begins its story again and again. We constantly rewrite the past and redefine it since the present revisits the past and is suffused with memories and their emotional tone.

To remember is to continue to exist. We need the web of names and places we can recall.

Foucault: 'Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity, the promise that the subject -- in the form of historical consciousness-- will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode.' The Foucault Reader, p. 82

History and narrative theory

We compose history as an integrative narrative out of textual artifacts from a past period, and we do so from the perspective of the present and from the point of view of a present historian

Moralizing tendency in this culture to elevate narrativity to the status of a value: Hayden White, "The Value Of Narrativity In The Representation Of Reality," The Content Of The Form, pp. 1-25.

For events to be narrable is taken as a mark of the real, as a guarantee of their historical truth [My Left Foot]

Rosseau and the treatment of subjectivity

1st person narrative: 'I' uses cultural codes to make 'experience' intelligible and place it in familiar framework. Use in arbitrating reality via articulating events. Narrative needed before we can evaluate events. Desire to make sense requires both a meaning and a moral, a structure, and order of meaning [H.White]

Jameson's version of white's that history = someone in the present composes a written narrative based on textual artifacts: = working "by way of prior [re]textualization."

What is the history of meaning? What are the conditions for producing meaning? Alien modes of discourse that are excluded? Authorized knowledge? Power reproducing itself when and how, minimally through the structures of language.

Critics also narrate and thus construct history.

The fallacy of recorded discourse, then edited

Recorded interviews transcribed, made into a film, etc.: Pl, 204: "Today, to perform the function of inquiry, or build a fantasy, one can get the collaboration of the model, and launch into a discourse about him by letting him speak and by seeming to quote one of his speeches. The analysis or the evocation of the life of the controlled classes is accomplished through the harnessing of an autobiographical speech that one creates and behind which one is sheltered. The strategy of recorded discourse outwardly neutralizes the opposition between one who is entitled to speak and one who is not."

Letting past and present experience, setting, consciousness interpenetrate. Whose?

Problem of how to write what it felt like to be this person

Class issues in oral history

The class basis of interpretation, production, and consumption of texts 'with/about' the previously voiceless and unheard. Capturing the processes of life that are disappearing, preserve memory is act of the controlling classes vis a vis the controlled classes. Poor are studied from above, from economic and political perspectives, the investigation is not made part of the narrated life story as affecting the person's life, the poor are imagined in the journalistic and fictional discourses of the dominant class.

Chicago had poorly assimilated immigrants. Create personal documents and check them with exterior sources of information, helped with problems of order and security, curbing delinquency and crime, grasping from within the logic of delinquency.

The function of texts that present the words of the poor: the discourse that networks of communication circulated promote ruling class ideology and values. These first person narratives "are the place where a collective identity is elaborated, reproduced, and transformed, the patterns of life appropriated to the ruling class." Pl, check text, p. 198 ruling class imposes an identity on all who are assimilated to it, and it rejects others as insignificant.

Often the poor expect appropriation and endure it. When they write, they may not get any response otherwise. Their story has a success when it meets a demand of the ruling class.

Structures of collecting and disseminating oral history

Journalistic use of the oral history approach, popular in France, many problems. In oral history, whose truth is to be told, the stages or moments of obligation to the personal integrity of the

subject and her story

Poor people's oral traditions turned into texts entail problems: literacy, acculturation, how printed works circulate in networks of communication. Archives disassociate the people who collect life stories and those who will eventually use them. Oral history interviews and docs often go unpublished for a long time

In writing or filming their own lives, the working class might commonly use the culture's standard narrative forms: novels, movies, newspaper and magazine articles, television talk shows, melodrama, writing style from grade school, adolescent readings -- whatever passes for verisimilitude in this cultural milieu at this time

Popular memory

Desire to see life of individ. as part of larger collective social experience, yet oral history not a recording of 'popular memory.' the poor are spoken for, are written.

Use of testimony by third world writers, even in novels and theater. Oral tradition as preserving a memory of oppression centuries past.

History writing is always a literary practice

Need to use someone's testimony about their childhood, since we have no other source from others except their testimony about their earliest years and memories

Teleological narrative = often assumed to be model for protagonist and her life history. Relation to naturalism when about the poor or oppressed, stories of victimization

Biography absolutely cannot doubt the reality of the historical past